

Against the Reversal

Two Essays on the Reversal of Enbridge's Line 9 Pipeline

Across North America, people are mobilizing to stop the flows of Tar Sands oil. Here in Southern Ontario, we need to do our part in choking off this disastrous project. Enbridge and the federal government are pushing for diluted bitumen from the Tar Sands to be carried in the Line 9 pipeline, flowing from Sarnia to Montreal through the most heavily populated area in Canada.

This is an opportunity for us to act in solidarity with the Indigenous-lead resistance to the Northern Gateway pipeline in British Columbia and with all those in the United States struggling against the Keystone XL. Inside are more details and context for resisting the Line 9 reversal.



Stop the Flows: No Tar Sands Oil in Ontario

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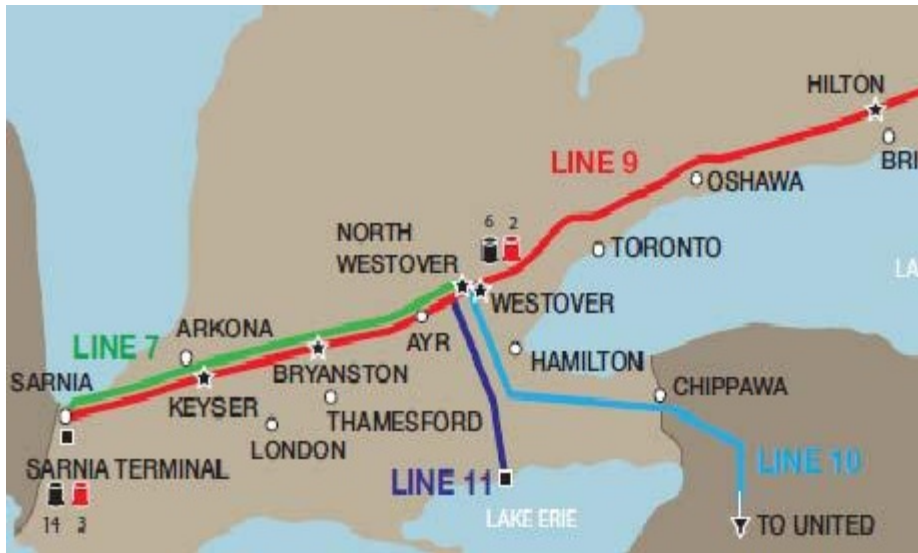
Tar Sands Pipelines as Bottle-necks against the
Consolidation of Power in Canada

Stop the Flows: No Tar Sands Oil in Ontario

pp 2-5, by Hamilton Line 9 - hamiltonline9.wordpress.com

Tar Sands Pipelines as Bottlenecks against the Consolidation of Power in Canada

pp 5-10, by anonymous - news.infoshop.org



Against the Reversal was produced in late 2012 by the Hamilton Line 9 crew. For updates about the struggle against Line 9, especially in Hamilton, visit hamiltonline9.wordpress.com or write to us at hamiltonline9@ecologyfund.net to get on our mailing list

Endnotes for Tar Sands Pipelines as Bottle-necks :

- 1) If you haven't seen how the dirtiest oil in the world is extracted, take a minute to look it up before reading on. <http://oilsandstruth.org/> is a good place to begin.
- 2) The 2012 omnibus federal budget bill, bill C-38, scrapped environmental assessments (and many other legal protections that were expensive for corporation) and maintained low taxes and infrastructural support for the Tar Sands. It also cut eligibility for Old Age Security, and Employment Insurance, among lots of other changes. Some more details here: <http://www.mediacoop.ca/story/10-reasons-oppose-bill-c-38/11347>
- 3) For an anarchist analysis of the current prison expansion, check out EPIC out of Kingston, <https://endthepic.wordpress.com>
- 4) J Richard Bird is the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer at Enbridge. He also owns Bird Construction, which was handed a 38.5 million dollar contract to build in Nova Scotia the first prison stemming from Bill C-10. Follow this link for a lefty analysis: <http://www.canadianprogressiveworld.com/2012/07/05/enbridge-executives-company-awarded-first-bill-c-10-38-5-million-prison-project/>
- 5) This paper studies the migration of workers from Nova Scotia to the Tar Sands region: www.justlabour.yorku.ca/volume17/pdfs/08_ferguson_press.pdf
- 6) For more information about opposition to the Pacific Trails pipeline, <http://intercontinentalcry.org/pacific-trails-pipeline-drillers-evicted-from-wetsuweten-territory/>
<https://unistotencamp.wordpress.com/>
- 7) The town of Saugeen Shores currently seems to be the likely recipient of all of Canada's spent nuclear fuel. <http://saveoursaugeenshores.org/>
- 8) On the Ring of Fire and opposition to it: <http://toronto.mediacoop.ca/story/first-nations-oppose-ring-fire-mining-projects/11622>
- 9) For updates on opposition to the Plan Nord: <http://www.indigenoussolidaritymontreal.net/>
- 10) An article about the escalation of spying against Indigenous people: <http://www.mediacoop.ca/story/rcmp-spied-protesting-first-nations/9303>

formidable, and even the arrogant, colonial federal conservative government would hesitate to provoke such an enormous confrontation with Indigenous nations.

The sheer monstrous ridiculousness of the Northern Gateway has made the third option for moving Tar Sands oil, the eastern path, seem so reasonable by comparison that every liberal organization in the country – from the NDP to the Toronto Star – is rushing to support it.

The reversal of Enbridge's Line 9 pipeline through Ontario is by far the least politically expensive and logistically simplest of the three routes for Tar Sands oil. It just involves reversing existing pipelines from Sarnia to Hamilton then on to Montreal. From there, another pipeline could be reversed to carry the oil to Portland, Maine where it would have easier access to Atlantic ports. A plan identical to the current Line 9 reversals was proposed back in 2008, but was withdrawn after the economic collapse and in the face of heated opposition.

We need to stop the movement of Tar Sands oil no matter what route it takes. Though we might argue about the risks of a spill to a particular sensitive area to gain local support, it doesn't matter if it's crossing pristine mountain streams or Hamilton Harbour. The Tar Sands is an ecological and social nightmare that benefits only the elites, and it's going to get worse if its market is allowed to expand.

Tar Sands oil is coming East. To all the anarchists, radical environmentalists, and militants of any sort along the Line 9 route: we have a golden opportunity to prevent the state and capitalists from further consolidating their power. Enbridge intends Line 9 to be fully ready for Tar Sands oil by the Spring of 2014, so our time frame is tight. There will not be very many easy sites of intervention (like construction projects, for instance) so we need to be ready in our home communities to act quickly when these chances present themselves.

Stop the Flows: No Tar Sands Oil in Ontario

Across North America, people are mobilizing to stop the flows of Tar Sands oil. Here in Southern Ontario, we need to do our part in choking off this disastrous project. Enbridge and the federal government are pushing for diluted bitumen from the Tar Sands to be carried in the Line 9 pipeline, flowing from Sarnia to Montreal through the most heavily populated area in Canada.

This is an opportunity for us to act in solidarity with the Indigenous-lead resistance to the Northern Gateway pipeline in British Columbia and with all those in the United States struggling against the Keystone XL. What follows are more details and context for the Line 9 reversal.

In late July, the National Energy Board approved a plan by Enbridge to reverse the flow of their Line 9 pipeline all the way from Sarnia to Montreal. This is part of a plan to move Tar Sands oil from Alberta to ports on the Atlantic coast. On its way, this oil will have to go through Hamilton, stopping at the Westover Terminal near Westover Rd and Concession 6 W in Flamborough.

As you all certainly know: “The Tar Sands 'Gigaproject' is the largest industrial project in human history and likely also the most destructive. The tar sands mining procedure releases at least three times the CO2 emissions as regular oil production and is slated to become the single largest industrial contributor in North America to Climate Change (oilsandstruth.org).” The human and environmental costs of the Tar Sands are staggering, and there is an accelerating movement to stop the flow of Tar Sands oil – if they can't ship it, they can't afford to take it out of the ground.

Opposition to the ludicrous Northern Gateway pipeline that would carry Tar Sands oil west, and to the Keystone XL that

would carry it south has already been historic. It is in the context of this powerful resistance, especially the unbroken wall of Indigenous communities blocking any route to the Pacific ocean (the Yinka Dene Alliance: <http://yinkadene.ca/>), that Enbridge is dusting off their old Trailbreaker pipeline proposal.

Enbridge first proposed Trailbreaker in 2008 explicitly to carry Tar Sands oil east by way of Sarnia, Westover, and Montreal, and then reverse another pipeline to take it across the border to Portland, Maine. However, united opposition to this, combined with the skepticism about the safety of this project from even the typically corrupt regulators lead Enbridge to use the financial collapse of 2008 as a pretense to shelve it.

Enbridge began advancing this same project in small steps: first they sought approval to reverse Line 9 between Sarnia and Westover while denying they intended to go any further; then, once that was approved, they sought to reverse it between Westover and Montreal while refusing to talk about shipping it to Maine. Until recently, they even refused to admit their plan was to carry diluted bitumen from the Tar Sands through the line at all.

What is produced at the Tar Sands is not yet oil. It is a dense, grainy substance called bitumen that needs substantial further treatment at refineries to become oil. To ship the bitumen in pipelines, it must be mixed with a dilutant, giving it about the consistency of peanut butter. In 2010, Enbridge's Line 6b, almost identical to line 9 in age and design, ruptured over the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. Line 6b was carrying diluted bitumen from the Tar Sands, and the ensuing disaster shows how the risks of transporting dilbit are not the same as the risks of transporting conventional oil.

When the spill occurred, the dilbit was no longer under the pressure it was inside the pipeline, and so the dilutant and the bitumen separated from each other. The bitumen sank to the bottom of the river and has since proved to be

treated as terrorists by the state, with huge amounts of intelligence resources dedicated to disrupting and suppressing their movements (10).

So if we recognize that the Tar Sands is a vital chokepoint for the political, economic, and industrial systems in this country, how do we position ourselves against it?

A key strategic principle is to bring decisive force to bear against your enemy at critical times and places. For those of us who see the Canadian state and economy as our enemies, the Tar Sands pipelines are critical places, and the moment to move against them is while they are being built or repurposed. This work is being done now and over the next couple of years. We will only have one such opportunity to stop this oil from reaching ports.

Three main paths for Tar Sands oil are actively being pursued at this time. The western path is known as the Northern Gateway and would see this dirty, toxic sludge transported across the Rocky Mountains, across the headwaters of countless rivers and streams, through the unceded territory of several Indigenous nations, to reach a port in one of the world's most hazardous waterways. To the south, the oil would travel down the Keystone XL pipeline, crossing ecologically sensitive regions everywhere along its route and disposessing hundreds of people of their land.

Both the western and southern paths have encountered massive resistance, especially from Indigenous Peoples. In particular, the Yinka-Dene alliance forms an unbroken wall of Indigenous nations blocking access of Tar Sands oil to the Canadian Pacific coast. Opposition to the Northern Gateway is so strong that even the opportunistic provincial government of British Columbia has jumped on the bandwagon to oppose the federal government's plan.

Another important strategic truth is that “an attacker willing to pay the price can always penetrate the strongest defenses.” But “defense is the stronger form of combat” and on the west coast, the defensive mobilization is already

continue to be Indigenous communities and people of colour, and these communities will also continue to bear the brunt of the toxicity associated with oil refining and manufacturing related to Tar Sands production. A company owned by an Enbridge executive has already received a contract to build a new prison in Nova Scotia following the passage of Bill C-10, the crime bill (4).

- Currently, about ten thousand men from Atlantic Provinces are employed in the Tar Sands (5), being coerced through economic necessity to spend their lives in boom towns like Fort McMurray, in an atmosphere dominated by drug addiction, organized crime, and sexual violence. These social problems then travel back home with them.

- Currently, there are several pipelines (including the Pacific Trails (6)) being built to supply the insatiable Tar Sands with natural gas. However, some industry estimates still say that even with this added supply, they'll be out of gas there in less than thirty years. The state intends to respond to this by building as many as twelve nuclear power plants. This waste will likely be stored on the shores of Lake Huron (7), and this escalation of nuclear power will likely fuel a new phase of nuclear armament as powerful countries vie for dwindling resources.

- The rhetoric of Canadian oil for Canadian consumers is preparing for a global future of ever increasing inequality. Alongside assuring its “have” status, Canada is moving to secure its borders, restricting freedom of movement and cracking down on migrants. The constitution of a national identity around privileged access to a decisive energy resource is inseparable from xenophobic, racist policies.

- Other areas in Canada are undergoing a boom in destructive extractive industries, particularly in the north. The Ring of Fire (8) developments in Ontario and le Plan Nord (9) in Quebec are two important examples. Financially and politically, these projects are deeply tied to the Tar Sands. It is only by maintaining privileged access to oil for industry that the Canadian state can envision these projects being at all viable over the long time frames imagined for them.

- Most of the factors discussed above affect Indigenous people disproportionately, because of the long-standing racist, colonial stratification of Canadian society. Native people who resist the Tar Sands and other incursions on their land and sovereignty are increasingly being

uncleanable. To this day, the bitumen is still at the bottom of the Kalamazoo River, helpfully covered in sand by Enbridge in a flimsy and literal “cover up”. The dilutant meanwhile became a toxic gas and spread rapidly through the surrounding area, contributing to the deaths of several nearby residents and resulting in seizure and permanent respiratory problems for many others.

With these enhanced risks, one would expect some sort of enhanced regulation for the proposal to carry diluted bitumen through Canada's most populated region. But the opposite is in fact the case. The Environmental Assessment for the Line 9 reversal was scrapped in the omnibus budget bill C-38. This means the only approval needed for this project is from the National Energy Board, which has neither the mandate or the resources to meaningfully oversee a project this important. We cannot trust the NEB to look out for our interests.

Are there really any advantages for people in Southern Ontario if the Line 9 reversal goes?

The nationalist claim that Tar Sands oil is somehow more ethical than oil from Venezuela and Saudi Arabia is an attempt to dress up an economic incentive in altruistic clothes. Oil from the Tar Sands is currently much cheaper than overseas oil, creating immense opportunities for the powerful to profit in areas that gain access to it. You won't be paying less for gasoline – it's just the profit margin for oil and gas companies that will increase.

It is obscene to claim that oil extracted from Alberta in a colossally polluting and destructive process, poisoning the Indigenous communities downstream, is more ethical than some other form of oil production. And it ignores the ethical issues associated with continuing to expand the oil economy at a time when climate change makes it obvious that a major downshift in consumption is needed.

Politicians are also trying to sell the Line 9 reversal to us on the argument that it will create jobs. The jobs oil

profiteers claim will be created are in Sarnia and Nanticoke, working in heavily toxic atmospheres amid downwards pressure on wages, benefits, and worker protections. The same federal and provincial governments that promise us these jobs are undercutting the ability of workers to collectively organize or to strike to protect themselves. Even if these jobs they offer materialize, they will only expose the few people who receive them to risky, toxic work in a precarious environment.

The Line 9 reversal has nothing to offer our communities. Only the powerful have anything to gain by involving Southern Ontario in the Tar Sands racket, but all of us will share the costs, especially as this dirty oil makes catastrophic climate change inevitable.

Tar Sands Pipelines as Bottlenecks against the Consolidation of Power in Canada

Perhaps more than at any other time in its history, the Canadian state has invested its future in a single massive industrial project. The Tar Sands (1) is increasingly the driver of Canada's economy, a symbol of its national identity, and central to how it seeks to position itself globally in the future. As pipeline projects advance across the continent, there is a pressing need for us to understand how, in opposing the transportation of Tar Sands oil, we have an unparalleled opportunity to disrupt the capitalist political system in this country. This is especially important in Ontario, where presently the movement against the pipelines is weakest.

Up to now, the Tar Sands oil has been largely landlocked and its price is suppressed by the glut of supply this has created in the markets that can access it. The elites in Canada see this inability to access broader markets

as hurting their profits, which in turn reduces their ability to reinvest in expanding the Tar Sands. From the perspective of the powerful, Tar Sands oil must have access to ports in order for the project to expand. The Canadian government has also been finalizing free-trade deals with China and the European Union, so the buyers are lined up once the oil is available.

Opposition to the extraction and transportation of Tar Sands oil has largely been seen as an environmental issue, with an emphasis on climate change and carbon emissions. Sustained resistance by Indigenous communities has made the issues of Indigenous sovereignty impossible to ignore in the Athabasca basins and in the regions crossed by the pipelines. In the past year, struggles against Tar Sands pipelines have intensified across Canada and the United States, and more reasons for opposing the Tar Sands have blossomed with each new community in struggle.

The Tar Sands is not just an environmental issue though, and it does not just affect the areas around its pipelines. The Tar Sands is increasingly central to how power exists in the Canadian territory. The current push to build pipelines is a crucial moment for both the financial and political systems, and for the movements that oppose them.

I don't want to be another voice claiming that one issue is the centre piece of the system of domination. However, this escalation in the movement and production of Tar Sands oil is very real and current, and it has links in almost every part of Canadian society. Here are a few examples:

- Austerity cuts to social programs are made with the same stroke of the pen that removes environmental oversight from pipeline projects and that sends massive subsidies and incentives to oil and pipeline companies. (2)
- The government prepares for the fallout of scrapping social programs by expanding the prison system (3). Those most affected by prison will